

# THE SOUL'S INHERITANCE

GEORGE CABOT LODGE



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By George Cabot Lodge

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**THE SOUL'S INHERITANCE**  
**AND OTHER POEMS**

## NOTE

*The poems in this volume were collected, arranged in their present order and prepared for publication by Mr. Lodge, shortly before his death. No change or addition has since been made.*

# THE SOUL'S INHERITANCE

AND OTHER POEMS

GEORGE CABOT LODGE



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# THE SOUL'S INHERITANCE

*Poem delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society,  
Cambridge, 1906*





# THE SOUL'S INHERITANCE

## I

### 1

MAGNIFICENT presence of the living Truth —  
We know not when thy swift, serene, strong flame  
Shall violate our sanctuaries of sleep!  
We know not when, from carnal lethargies  
And trivial pastimes and derisive dreams  
Of ineffectual felicities,  
Irresolutions and timidities  
And temperate ambitions, we shall wake  
To find our safe exclusions overborne,  
The pale of our defence invaded, all  
Our precincts of secure retreat destroyed;  
To feel the dark enchantments yield; to hear  
Thy trumpets blowing in our citadels,  
The shouting of thy liege-men on the hillsides,  
And in our ears thy far and forward call;  
To lift at last unconquerable eyes  
Suddenly to the challenge of the sunrise,  
And feel thereafter always by thy light  
Delivered from the mean distrust of death,  
The tyranny of time, the brief content  
Of all achievement and prosperity  
Less than perfection, and at last resolved

## THE SOUL'S INHERITANCE

To illustrate in thought and word and deed,  
In life and death, the utmost that we are! —  
We know not when or where or in what wise  
Thou shalt appear, imperishable Truth,  
Spirit of Liberty! — but well we know  
That life and death are only thine adventure.  
And well we know the time of revelation  
Is always now — eternity is now!  
The place of miracles is always here —  
Infinity is here! Then here and now,  
And in thy name, O latent Truth within us,  
In thought and word and deed, in life and death,  
Let us report and celebrate the soul!

### 2

Let us report and celebrate the soul,  
In thought and word and deed, in life and death!  
Then may we feel, perchance, the God within us,  
Whose worship waits and who has slept so long,  
Revive at last, athletic and superb,  
Stand forth from custom, creed and circumstance,  
Reclaim his high, inherent liberties,  
And stem the rush of the resistless hours, —  
Till, for a spacious interval, we see  
The veils of darkness and deception fall  
And leave us, eager of our enterprise,  
Transparent to our own reality,  
Against the thrilled, tremendous heart of time! . . .

## THE SOUL'S INHERITANCE

Then shall it come to pass — as we report  
The soul and celebrate the soul in life  
And death — that hardly and mysteriously  
The stubborn prison-walls of ignorance  
Shall yield beneath our blind, insistent hands,  
And, bruised with misadventures in the dark,  
We shall achieve the soul's advance, and stand  
Bathed in the light remedial, and behold  
The broad, released, bright waters of the soul,  
Sun-dazzled and resistless, rush away  
Forever and forever to the sea! . . .

### 3

O to report, to celebrate the soul!  
O to proclaim ourselves and all we are,  
In thought and word and deed, in life and death!  
O to depart, avid of explorations,  
Winged and resolved, curious, in time and space —  
There to retrieve the soul's inheritance,  
There to report and celebrate the soul!  
O to confess at last who is the Lord! —  
To find at last, beyond to-day, in all  
The innumerable yesterdays of time,  
The onward, latent, long millenniums,  
A rumour of us and a recollection! —  
To learn at last that always for the soul,  
In the dark earth and the deep sea, throughout  
Chill ethers and the pale star multitudes,

## THE SOUL'S INHERITANCE

The path leads homeward and the place is home! —  
To know at last that never and nowhere  
The soul is stranger, never and nowhere  
Without recognizance and habitation! —  
To learn, to know, to realize utterly  
That time and space are phases of the soul! . . .  
O let us perfectly report the soul  
And celebrate the soul, until at last  
No time, no space, no state is vacant of us! —  
Until at last the sense revives within us  
Of indissoluble identity  
With sun and earth and beast, with man and God! —  
Until at last, from granite, schist and shard,  
From senseless jellies and brute envelopes,  
We mark our stages of deliverance,  
The age-long, upward levels of our flight, —  
And feel the restless, resolute, firm soul,  
Conscious and lord of life after so long,  
Still by the insatiable impulse driven,  
Transgress the forms and infidelities,  
The calculations and economies,  
That prove our insufficiency! — until  
At last we share the ancient and divine  
Companionship of peril and perfection  
With all who once bore witness to the truth,  
And were compounded of the celestial fire! —  
Then shall we stand, central and self-assured,  
To labour in the austere fraternity



## THE SOUL'S INHERITANCE

Of Gods and Saviours, till our lives record,  
As theirs, — our deaths, as theirs, declare the soul!  
Then may we learn at last that here and now  
The very light is parcelled in our vision,  
Wherewith Father Prometheus disclosed  
The kindled soul's transcendent regency;  
That here and now, in free communion,  
We break the bread of life and speak the word  
Of life, as when the veiled respondents sang  
Clear, at Eleusis, in the sacred gloom;  
That here and now, no less for each of us,  
That inward voice, cogent as revelation,  
That trance of truth's sublime discovery,  
Which in the soul of Socrates wrought out  
Gold from the gross ore of humanity,  
Still speak, still hold, still work their alchemy;  
That here and now, and in the soul's advance,  
And by the soul's perfection, we may feel  
The thought of Buddha in our mortal brain,  
The human heart of Jesus in our breast,  
And in our will the strength of Herakles! . . .

### 4

O to report, to celebrate the soul,  
Equal at last and forward with the Captains,  
On the long frontiers where the twilight dies! —  
There with uplifted voices that shall sound,  
Sound and resound amid the loud and long

## THE SOUL'S INHERITANCE

Vociferations of the embattled souls,  
There to report the soul — in the broad dusk  
Of hesitation, in the immeasurable  
Unknown — O there to celebrate the soul!  
There to resume the retrospect, to find,  
Up the bright courses of the stairs of thought,  
The traces of our perilous ambition!  
There to endure the prospect, and, at last,  
In the proud might of the soul's will, to bear  
The peril as of intense emergencies,  
The storm and strength as of gigantic wings,  
The glare as of deep-driven lightnings, — all  
The multitudinous menace of the night!  
Importunate and undissuadable,  
There, for the sole sake of the endless voyage,  
There to stand out over the utmost verge,  
Where the mist drives and the night overwhelms! . . .  
There in our skies the stars of revelation;  
There in our hearts the burning lamp of love;  
There in our sense the rhythm and amplitude  
And startled splendour of the seas of song; —  
And there at last — our own infinity,  
Our own eternity still unappeased! —  
There, for ourselves, for freedom, truth, perfection,  
There to report and celebrate the soul! . . .

## II

STRANGELY, inviolably aloof, alone,  
Once shall it hardly come to pass that we,  
As with his Cross, as up his Calvary,  
Burdened and blind, ascend and share his throne  
And perfectly, as with our lives, atone  
For the heart's triumph, for the soul's victory! —  
Yet may we seem thereafter, dead as he,  
To lie within life's sepulchre of stone . . .  
But he is risen, the Lord is risen! — and thus,  
Thus may he rise, the Lord may rise in us,  
Who sleeps, who is not dead, who lives alway!  
And all who come love-kindled to the tomb,  
Shall find, as Mary found, an empty room,  
And meet the Lord, alive and on his way! . . .

### III

“I AM the Way, the Life, the Truth!” he said. —  
Deep in the soul of every man alway  
There is a voice that says, “I am the Way;  
“I am the Life, the Truth, the Living Bread!”  
And whoso hearkens he is comforted:  
Well he discerns the Paraclete is there,  
The Soul of Truth, the Christ, the Comforter,  
Who, tho’ the mortal dies, is never dead.  
He is within us all, whom we have sought:  
The Way, the Life, the Truth, the Paraclete,  
The soul, who ranges with resplendent feet,  
Silent and swift, from peak to peak of thought;  
He is the Lord for whom the task is wrought;  
He is the Lover whom we haste to meet! . . .



#### IV

“ASK what you will, it shall not be denied;

“ Knock, and the secret door shall stand ajar;

“ Seek, and however much the way is far,

“ Yet shall the Bridegroom find, who seeks the  
Bride!” —

He knows how much the truth is justified,

Who is not unambitious as we are;

He finds, beyond the star we seek, a star,

Beyond our dreams, a soul unsatisfied.

He knows, and That within us more than we

Shall learn, how much we leave the best undone;

How little there is end or rest or peace;

And how the Asker and the Alms are one;

How whoso knocks brings welcome and release;

And how the search is the discovery! . . .



## PILGRIMS

*Poem delivered at the annual dinner of the New England Society,  
New York, December, 1906*



## PILGRIMS

### I

#### 1

PILGRIMS! — The choir of their adventured days  
Sounds to the living, inward ear, and tho'  
Their eyes are quenched, their lips are dumb with dust,  
Yet, in imperishable communion,  
Clear thro' the soundless retrospect of time,  
Well may our spirits now to theirs respond.  
For we who, in their stead, bear up the fire,  
Bear on the torch of life's inherent faith  
And inconsiderate will, may well discern,  
Illustrious in their lives, the Pilgrim Soul  
Of Man on its eternal pilgrimage. . . .  
Yes, for their deeds bear witness! Yes, for they,  
Lit by some spark of the Promethean fire,  
Publish their own recognizance, — afford  
Proof of the Lord's dominion in his house, —  
And by the old, the indefectible signs  
Show how they earned their stern and splendid name!  
O hearts of perished men, how shall we learn  
Your secret, save as all your acts record  
What angers vexed you and what loves fulfilled?

## PILGRIMS

And well we know of these most arduous men,  
At least, that here, across the bitter sea,  
They rashly ventured into peril and exile  
Not for renown or power or merchandise, —  
Not for the world's remembrance or reward!  
Rather they went abroad with the new Gods  
Of their deliverance, for in new, clear wise  
Their hearts received the old, austere, divine,  
Tremendous guidance of the Cloud and Flame  
Which lead the spirit out of bondage, move  
Thro' waste and sea to bring the Pilgrim home.  
Theirs was no profitable enterprise  
Of traffic or of conquering caravels;  
Rather their ships were ventured as the soul  
Of man goes forth on life's storm-shadowed sea,  
To find that better place where dreams come true  
Of God's fresh purpose in the heart, and where  
Liberty prospers in the wilderness! . . .

### 2

O let us now return in thought and love  
To these rebellious men! — that here and now  
Their stern remembrance in the House of Life  
May rouse at last the Lord of Life from sleep:  
Lest we grow tired and tame and temperate;  
Lest we grow stable, settled and secure;  
Lest we no longer hear the voice, discern  
The light that made them Pilgrims; lest our minds



## PILGRIMS

Scant the truth's welcome; lest our hearts forego  
The labour and liberality of love;  
Lest we forget that still the Pilgrimage  
Fills the long prospect of the Pilgrim Soul!  
We *are* the Pilgrims! — Shall we less deserve,  
Than they deserved, that stern and splendid name?  
Or, less than they, afford the rightful Heir  
His incommensurable heritage?  
Rather, as now the light of truth expands  
In statelier vistas to the inward eye; —  
Rather, as now, with more perfected faith  
And more religious ecstasy, we learn  
That life and destiny and death and time  
And God and all the long captivities,  
Creeds and enslavements of the mind of man,  
Which tamed the heart and set, on every hand,  
Brief bounds to life's insatiable hope,  
Are but the myths and symbols of the spirit,  
Garments outworn and mansions long outgrown; —  
Therefore, as truth is merciless and just  
And perfect as each one of us must be,  
Inexorably and with deliberate feet  
Let us of these and all dead dreams and things  
Tread down the dust into the common way,  
That man may liberally advance! — for thus  
May we with haughtier strength and hardihood  
Send forth the vagrant and victorious soul  
From dreams and desolate insanities

## PILGRIMS

And gross deceptions of the solid world,  
Into the shining night, on to the Road! . . .  
Well may we know it lies before us still,  
Who are the Pilgrims, as it stretched for them  
Whose pilgrimage is done! — the self-same road,  
Hazardous, hard, unknown, which leads afar,  
Thro' lusts and lies, thro' laws and governments,  
Thro' settled customs and established creeds, —  
Thro' all substantial things and sensible forms.  
And well for us if we may find it out,  
And walk thereon our spiritual way  
Forward to real achievements and progressions, —  
Pilgrims, as once they were, in high resolve  
Launched on the Pilgrimage that once was theirs! . . .

## II

THEY are gone. . . . They have all left us, one by one :  
Swiftly, with undissuadable strong tread,  
Cuirassed in song, with wisdom helmeted,  
They are gone before us, into the dark, alone . . .  
Upward their wings rush radiant to the sun ;  
Sea-ward the ships of their emprise are sped ;  
Onward their star-light of desire is shed ;  
Their trumpet-call is forward ; — they are gone !  
Let us take thought and go ! — we know not why  
Nor whence nor where — let us take wings and fly !  
Let us take ship and sail, take heart and dare !  
Let us deserve at last, as they have done,  
To say of all men living and dead who share  
The soul's supreme adventure, — *We* are gone ! . . .

### III

LET us go hence! — however dark the way,  
Let us at all adventure hasten hence!  
Too well we know what secret excellence,  
Real and unrealized, brooks no more delay  
Of who would make love perfect, and display  
In life the spirit's true magnificence . . .  
Haste! — lest we lose the clear, ambitious sense  
Of what is ours to gain and to gainsay.  
Let us go hence, lest dreadfully we die —  
Die at the core of life where love is great,  
Where thought is grave, audacious and serene . . .  
Thither and hence all vast achievements lie,  
There where the truth's transcendent virtues wait  
Up the dark distance, radiant tho' unseen! . . .

#### IV

O GREAT departures from the thrift and care  
Of a less love, of a less truth than we  
Can hardly, in the last extremity  
Of all our powers, believe that we may share! —  
Nobler prosperities, that wait us where  
We go — if we have strength and will to be  
Mariners of whatever wreck-strewn sea,  
Waifs on whatever ways shall take us there! —  
O great departures! — O prosperities! —  
Ventures and consummations! — you are hence:  
Hence from the safe denials and pieties  
Which life is eased and ruined and pleased of! —  
For the strong heart conceives no bounds of love,  
The soul no measure of magnificence! . . .





## **LIFE IN LOVE**



## LIFE IN LOVE

### I

#### 1

CLEAR and profound and dark as well-water,  
Grave eyes transfused with gold, you were not blind; —  
You were not numb, brave breathless heart of joys,  
Proud heart of mercies and mysterious tears, —  
You were not faithless, when the shrine lay bare  
And there was splendour in the sanctuary,  
As momentarily between us, from afar,  
White thro' the mist, rose-hued as with the young  
Life-blood of love's desire, soul signed to soul! . . .  
You were not blind, wild eyes whose glance disclosed  
Love's power and purpose which no tongue can tell;  
Loosed and abandoned heart, which, swift as fire,  
Seized the soul's heritage, you were not numb,  
When first we saw the spirit and the source  
Of life's pure essence, like a light revealed  
Within us, radiant and alone; — when first  
We knew the whole and best of love remained,  
Sphered in the new transcendency of life  
Beyond us, like a still unravished bride; —  
When first we felt, in one another's arms, —  
Strange and extreme to us, almost as death, —

## LIFE IN LOVE

The tragic sense of solitude; — when first  
We were with love together — yet alone!  
Grave eyes, brave heart, in vain, it seemed in vain  
We saw, we dared, we were not faithless then,  
We were not weak. — Yea, love itself seemed vain  
That one first day of wonder and no words!  
For, hour by hour and all the new day long,  
And hour by hour and all the thrilled night thro',  
And while your hands clung and your lips assured,  
And while my life-blood thundered on your breast,  
We were alone — together, yet alone! . . .

### 2

So was it shown to us as in a vision,  
That day; — and once again, that sleepless night,  
As in a trance we seemed to go afar  
From love's inveterate violence of being,  
From life's incessant uproar, and, alone,  
Pause in the thrilled tranquillities of thought. . . .  
There, with the pulse still rhythmic in our hearts  
Of love's wild music, and the flush still warm  
About us, of the senses' leaping flame,  
We heard the more ineffable song — as yet  
Wordless and distant to the inward ear —;  
We saw the lordlier light — as yet pearl-hued  
Thro' the fresh twilights which precede the dawn —;  
We felt the loftier hope, the larger whole,  
The lovelier rapture of that deeper sense

## LIFE IN LOVE

Of life, which of the spirit's utmost strength  
Alone, — with vast completions and austere  
Beginnings and perceptions clear and new,  
Valid and delicate as truth must be —  
Conceived in secret, is matured and born.  
And then — and all at first — and in the new  
Anguish of solitude — and from the far,  
Still, spiritual mansion — ours at last! —,  
The life we long had lived and shared appeared  
Vague and fantastic thro' the friendless dark, —  
As something somewhere for a little while  
On the immense horizons, like a dream  
On the remote and restless marge of sleep, —  
Like the dull rumour and the distant flare,  
To one who dwells by a deserted sea,  
Of some tumultuous city on the verge. . . .  
Yes! . . . we discerned, in the full, first, strange hour,  
How much our lives had been a blinded sense  
Of twilight, brief and brave and treacherous, —  
A clashing sound of song and lamentation, —  
A tragic spectacle of men and things  
Innumerable and hurried and estranged,  
And all phantasmal, and remote to us,  
And insignificant, — like some confused  
And shouted tidings, borne by false reports  
And faithless messengers, to where the Lord  
Still in dark chambers stayed and slept unknown. . . .  
Then, with a deeper meaning, beautiful

## LIFE IN LOVE

And tender, in our hearts revived once more  
Love, and the free hilarities of all  
The young earth-children in the rain-swept Spring,  
And the tremendous tears that rise like rain  
Blown from the dark, unplumbed, adventurous seas  
Of spiritual solitude — to fall  
Like a confession in the dust of death. . . .  
And then — and then — as wonderfully we  
Received the secret, and our sight, at last,  
Cleared with the vigil, and our hearts grew calm, —  
Turning, we saw in one another's eyes,  
Silent as star-light, silver-clear as song,  
The light from peak to peak beacon afar  
Thro' darkness . . . , and our hearts kindled anew,  
And love matured and strengthened to endure  
The labour and achieve the heritage. . . .

### 3

For then not yours alone and mine alone, —  
Darling, we knew at last! — but ours and love's  
Was the supreme and sacred best — the soul's  
Perfect inheritance; and hand in hand,  
Ambitiously, we took the high resolve:  
Knowing no beauty of our lives was lost,  
No passion scanted, no desire, no joy,  
Withered or dispossessed, if all, at last,  
Was with the one perfection kindled thro', —  
If, for love's pleasure and communion,



## LIFE IN LOVE

Spirit and sense and heart and mind together,  
Inseparable and single, all at once  
Thrilled to the deeper sense of life, and proved  
All valid, all victorious, all redeemed! . . .  
Then haste was in our hearts lest we should live  
Leaving the best unshared — lest we should die  
Dreadfully twain, before the task was done! . . .  
“Haste! There is haste,” we cried, “for time is now  
“And brief; and love’s far prospect goes away  
“Down the free high-road of the perfect quest . . .  
“And it may well be long! . . .” — Yes! long indeed,  
We thought — who knew how much the heart is frail,  
How dark the venture and how far the goal —,  
Well may it be, in truth it shall be long,  
It shall be gradual and austere to bring  
The wild wild love into the soul’s dominion;  
It shall be strange and splendid to prepare  
The House of song and fire and festival,  
His House at last, his lord-ship, for the Lord;  
It shall be wholly arduous and divine  
And feasible to lock the lips of Pan  
With the tremendous silences of truth,  
And task his strong lascivious limbs with toil:  
To force true service from the ancient foe,  
And lay strict burdens on the winged steed;  
And it shall be a triumph and ecstasy  
To drive love’s lightnings up the sullen night, —  
To fashion of the fire that lurks and leaps

## LIFE IN LOVE

And sings and kindles in the source of life  
A lamp to guide us in the spirit's peril! . . .  
So, in life's haste and in love's jeopardy,  
Were we resolved, however hard and long  
It well might be, and we however weak,  
To lay, with hands of longing and control,  
The soul's strong harness on the mighty beast,  
So he might labour for us — until at last  
We, of his strength, were lifted and unbound . . .

### 4

Soft, sombre hair — strange sweetness of my Love —  
Clear, rose-pale, sensuous lips, and white, small breasts  
Set spaciouly asunder —, not in vain,  
Not for the moment's rapture are you fair!  
Deeper than life, and nobler far than joy,  
In you previsioned, may the mind discern,  
The heart receive interpretations — signs  
Soon to reveal the secret —, as we stand,  
Like exiles who return from very far,  
Where the calm light lies warm along the threshold,  
And the soul's silence in the shining house  
Welcomes with love the glad wayfarer home! . . .  
Home — to the soul! My Darling — now, indeed,  
More than the promise is fulfilled, we know! . . .  
For we have been, in many a night and day,  
Perfect to one another; we have loved,  
And felt the imperishable hours bring forth

## LIFE IN LOVE

Beauty, and delicate intensities  
And amplitudes of being, and liberties,  
And rapt persuasions of the living truth. . . .  
And we have lived and loved by noon and night,  
Seeming transfigured . . . ; and the loveliness  
Of earth and sea and sky has been to us  
More spacious and sublime — a more serene  
And spiritual rapture! . . . Yes! — and life  
Is, in its sensuous strength, a sacred thing  
To us; and all its large hilarities,  
Flushed youth and sexual impulse in the blood,  
The flowing and abundant natural heart's  
Affections, and the mind's far gyres of thought,  
Yield to the spirit and the finer sense  
And understanding, patiently matured,  
And stedfast longing and adventurous mind,  
Treasures of theirs beyond our partial dreams . . .  
Home, to the soul! . . . My Darling, still and still  
The quest is ours — the quest, in sense and soul! . . .  
Still is the way before us, and the power  
Within us, and the longing unassuaged, —  
Darling! — and still between us life and love! . . .

## II

THAT day we saw the sunlight dawn and die,  
The twilight close, the dusk grow deep and still,  
The red moon rise, the white moon climb the hill,  
And darkness fill the caverns of the sky . . .  
That night we saw the storm-strewn beaches lie  
Endless and pale, the midnight stare with stars,  
The ocean flash like countless scimitars, —  
And felt the feet of time go soundless by . . .  
That day! That night! — We saw the harvest rise,  
Of truth's immortal seed, and yield its grain,  
Where thro' the soul's starved acres love had  
passed . . .  
We were like mariners whose sleepless eyes  
Have sought on each horizon's verge in vain  
Their landfall — and who come to port at last! . . .

### III

THAT day love stood like sunrise at the goal;  
The labyrinth of life seemed filled with light;  
And, as we passed, a splendour calm and bright  
Wreathed for the brows of death an aureole.  
Swiftly, we saw dissolve from pole to pole  
Wide gyres of indistinguishable night,  
Till, grave with raptures of austere delight,  
We stood in the vast day-break of the soul! . . .  
Then, as in memory's spectral afterglow,  
Life seemed a rumour of far things, a tale  
Told in a ghostly twilight, long ago . . .  
And Love, whose guidance we had shared so long,  
Paused on the verge of death's inviolate pale  
With lips of silence and with eyes of song . . .

## IV

THAT night of spiritual silences

We found love's inmost silence, where the days

Are silent, where the perishable phrase

Of song is silent, and where silence is

Like light along majestic distances

Opened before the soul's unswerving gaze . . .

Where life is silent, and the blatant ways

Of life, and life's divine uncertainties . . .

There we beheld the dark enigmas yield

In silence, and in silence truth appear,

Stainless as star-light on a silver shield . . .

And still we felt, as in transcendent skies

Beyond the mind's last outpost, calm and clear,

Silence and glittering tranquillities. . . .



## LOVE IN LIFE



## LOVE IN LIFE

### I

BEAUTY and Truth are like a stedfast shore  
Bathed in tranquillities of boundless light;  
Veiled in the stainless garments of the night,  
Gemmed with the glory of eternal stars;  
And there, enisled above the reach and roar  
And windy wreck of Time's abysmal sea,  
Life, like Odysseus worn with works and wars,  
Love, like the Nymph Kalypso, half-divine,  
Meet and commune, transfuse and interwine,  
Thro' mortal hours of immortality. . . .  
So has it been for us — as it shall be  
Still and hereafter so! But now, once more, —  
Now, while the powers of life and love are whole  
And perfect to their inmost core, —  
Now, one by one and all inexorably  
The imperishable hours are spent,  
The hours of new, renewed abandonment,  
Of life's surrender, soul and sense,  
Of love's possession, sense and soul;  
And while our spirits yield and yearn,  
And while the heart lies naked still  
And still the fain, flushed senses thrill,  
The swift and ceaseless tides return

## LOVE IN LIFE

To bear life's restless venture hence. . . .  
Now, therefore — now, Beloved — my Darling, now  
While still the golden and transparent glow  
Of the inextinguishable desire  
Colours thy pale and perfumed loveliness, —  
Now while love's assignation still is sweet  
In the high, bridal mansions of the heart, —  
Veiled and voluptuous and discreet,  
With eyes still open to their depths of fire,  
Still rash, still languid with love's long caress,  
Once more, with me, Beloved, rise up, depart! —  
Once more,  
Pass from the shadowed door! . . .

Winged with the Spirit; robed in light and song  
Born of the purest ecstasies which throng  
The unutterable heart transfused with love;  
Let us return, transfigured from above,  
As thro' love's lingering sunset's golden haze  
To life's familiar, tried and transient ways. . . .  
Let us, as many a time before,  
Together, while the great lights wane,  
Traverse the sombre corridor,  
And by the steep, dark, silent stair  
Descend together from the secret room  
Where, thinly, in the perfumed air,  
Pale thro' the curtained window-pane,  
The veiled light falls along the breathing bed. . . .

## LOVE IN LIFE

While quietly overhead  
Round the low, narrow cornice grows the gloom. . . .  
Let us return! This hour of life is dead:  
Love and the Truth's eternities remain!  
Hither and hence the ways of love are sane,  
Splendid and sane and secret to the end!  
Therefore with Love, as freely with a friend,  
Hence from the heart's invincible regency,  
From sanctuary,  
From this clear Eden, this sequestered place,  
The breathless, long desire, the brief embrace,  
The eyes that lighten and the lips that burn,  
Let us return! . . .

Life sounds its thunder-call! —  
Fearless, Beloved, as lovers let us go,  
Radiant with love's resplendent after-glow,  
Down from the garden and the festival;  
Down from the pleasaunce and the shadowed wall;  
Down from the vineyard by the shining shore;  
Down to the storm-swept stream of life once more!  
Come! — for our lives shall not be less,  
Since Love goes with us side by side,  
Borne forth on Time's tremendous tide,  
Than in this Paradise of love's excess  
And incommunicable happiness. . . .  
Therefore, receptive, ardent, bold,  
Let us go down, go forth, and fare:

## LOVE IN LIFE

As, garmented in sunset-gold,  
Winged with the midnight's moonless air,  
Hazardous men go down in ships  
To the inhospitable seas. . . .  
Swift and responsive on our lips,  
Life's large hilarities resound;  
Clear in our eyes and hearts abound  
The light no loveless vision sees,  
The joy no loveless heart can share;  
And, in the rumouring street below,  
Life's human currents rise and flow —  
Whither or whence we neither know nor care!  
Only our hearts rejoice as now we go —  
Lovers, alone, together — down,  
This first of nightfall, to the sleepless town,  
The streaming thoroughfare! . . .  
O my Beloved, how sweet it is,  
How dear and human, strange and sweet,  
Free and afoot a night like this,  
To wander forth; to feel again  
The mighty murmur and multitude of men;  
To see, in fire and smoke, the street,  
Strident as Hell's remorseless gorge,  
Furious with faces, disappear  
Between the endless lamps alight,  
Into the sunset flaming like a forge! —  
While, interfused with the gold atmosphere,  
Quietly falls, this end of afternoon,

## LOVE IN LIFE

The grey, great shadow of night,  
Whereunder shines the round, red, murky moon,  
Like a low lantern, watchful and withheld  
Under the cloak of a conspirator . . .  
The street is like a flaring corridor  
In some fantastic, harlot's house of song  
And wine and women and wantonness and wrong! . . .  
And sweet it is to understand  
The rash desire, the thrilled delight,  
And by the restless charm compelled  
To feel our eager lives impelled  
With life's strong stream, and hand in hand  
To wander in the lessening light. . . .  
O sweet it is, O wild and sweet,  
To feel the young heart's vagrancies  
Resume dominion! — while the night comes down,  
Dressed in her smoke-begrimed, star-spangled gown,  
Like a procuress, witching, old and wise:  
The silent, sinister, discreet  
Accomplice of the brawling, bawdy street,  
Who shelters and secludes from sight  
The dreams, desires and deeds that shrink from  
light —  
Exquisite, rash, lascivious privacies;  
The eyes of lust, the virgin's startled eyes;  
The assassin's knife, the victim's broken breath;  
The pain of poverty, disease and death; —  
The heart's supreme, inviolate secrecies! . . .

## LOVE IN LIFE

Yea, Love — how free, how intimate, how sweet,  
How vagrant and voluptuous, arm in arm,  
At dark to wander in the city street! —  
As lovers whose desires fulfil  
Of life and love the secret will,  
To pass, to pause, to swiftly lean  
In shadowed porticoes, to kiss  
With wilful lips, abandoned, eager, warm;  
With eyes unseeing and hands that clasp unseen; —  
To share our secret, and because of this  
Feel our two lives miraculously one,  
Our hearts disclosed in rapt communion! . . .  
O Love, how sweet to fold our solitude  
About us like a mantle, and pass on  
Loved and companioned thro' the multitude! . . .  
How sweet to have no heed or care  
Whither we go or whence we come,  
Since truth is ours to do and dare,  
And all the labyrinthine ways  
Of human life are the soul's thoroughfare,  
And all the spacious nights and flowing days  
Are as pavilions where the heart goes home  
To love — the perfect love we share!  
The soul is here, the soul is there;  
Hither or hence the heart is fain;  
The truth is hard and high and sane  
In every time and everywhere:  
And we as lovers well may feel



## LOVE IN LIFE

The lustrous eyes of love reveal  
The free, unutterable, just  
And secret spiritual trust  
That truth is possible, that we  
Shall yet be perfect as we must!  
Love dares not dream of less than this;  
No less can life believe or be;  
The smiles and frowns of Lachesis,  
Who sits with fortune on her knee,  
Are to the spirit vain and vile.  
For always, when and where we are, —  
Here in the street where mile on mile,  
In hope and fear, the captives press;  
There in the sacred, secret room  
Where life is love's and loveliness, —  
The human soul's transcendent doom  
Is ours alone to make or mar!  
Ourselves are all, and all we know:  
And therefore, strictly as the cost  
Of life to us is high or low,  
The game is won, the game is lost;  
Since always by how much we give  
Of life and love and thought and power and faith,  
By so much and no less we love and live,  
Find and possess the soul,  
And, reassured of life, confront the goal,  
Fearful of no betrayal after death. . . .

## LOVE IN LIFE

Darling — the street is endless . . . and the night  
Eternal . . . and the sacred, secret room  
Is always furnished in the heart and fair! —  
Love's bridal chamber is adorned, and there  
The Paranymp, arrayed in golden light,  
Waits for the Bridegroom in the quiet gloom. . . .  
Still in the bridal chamber — still alone,  
The Bridegroom and the Paranymp — with love,  
With life and love together: — even so  
Let us begone! — and we are gone, and go  
Into the street . . . into the night . . .  
Where the stars rise and life's dark waters flow . . .  
Where, gyre on gyre and row on row,  
Shine, inextinguishably bright,  
The lamps that Truth, the eternal Lamplighter,  
Kindles above  
The brawling, bawdy street of life,  
To guide the spiritual Wayfarer . . .  
Lovers we are! As lovers going home, —  
Home to the heart with love's high secret rife;  
Home to the spirit's thrilled eternity; —  
Come, let us go! The best is ours to be!  
Body and soul together, Darling, come! . . .

## II

I SAW her shining garments cling  
    Around her like a moon-lit mist;  
    Her eyes were clear as amethyst;  
    Her hair was like a sea-bird's wing  
Dark in the gold of evening;  
    And in the hushed room's narrow space  
    The light lay mild across her face:  
    She seemed as one about to sing. . . .  
She sang not — and without a stir  
    Time passed between us; and the light  
    Abounded, and the strength of love:  
The light, the life, the strength whereof  
    The truth is nurtured . . . while the night  
    Darkened and the stars lightened over her. . . .

### III

HER voice is pure and grave as song;  
Her lips are flushed as sunset skies;  
The power, the myth, the mysteries  
Of life and death in silence throng  
The secret of her silences;  
Her face is sumptuous and strong,  
And twilights far within prolong  
The spacious glory of her eyes.  
Her heart is like a place of power,  
A pale of peace, a precinct of  
Passion and all-consuming love . . .  
Her thought is like a lofty tower;  
Her soul is like a Bride therein,  
Whom only truth and love shall win.

#### IV

I SAW her sandals of grave gold  
Move on the marble, soft as light;  
Her motion was like birds in flight;  
The bountiful, the new, the old  
Deep secret that no tongue has told  
Was born of her — as is the white  
First flame of day-break from the night,  
As song-birds wake, as flowers unfold.  
And then I kissed her sandals of  
Grave gold, and kissed her hands and mouth;  
And knew how more serene than song,  
How spacious and how strong is Love! —  
Spacious as thought is of the truth;  
Strong as the conscious soul is strong! . . .



UNISON





## UNISON

### I

#### 1

THRONGED with the unpetitionable truth,  
Which from the love-surrendered and one heart  
Shone in the spirit's starred tranquillity,  
Hued with deep light the soaring wings of song,  
And thro' the labyrinthine flesh transfused,  
Subtile as fire, the elemental blood,  
We felt the indefectible prodigy  
Of life respond to our prodigious lives,  
While, with an eye new-opened to discern  
Meaning and revelation, we beheld  
The immemorial loveliness of earth! . . .  
The mountain rose in power beneath our feet,  
Vestured in basalt and the endless grass;  
Crested with forest swelled the distant hills,  
Whence towering unalterable amid  
Spacious serenities of sky and sun  
Rose the ranged peaks of naked stone. . . . Below,  
Gold lightnings kindled on the leaping stream,  
And over nurtured fields and pasturage  
Coloured new harvests and perennial bloom, —  
While over all, like benediction, lay

## UNISON

Calm azure of the immeasurable skies  
And stintless gold of the down-pouring sun! . . .  
And we, in that exceeding hour, were not  
Passionless or insensible! The voice  
Of the united being of the world,  
Life's unison and love's antiphonal,  
Sang like an ocean to the inward ear;  
Beneath earth's bridal garments, gemmed with light,  
Enwreathed with flowers, and perfumed with the faint  
Measureless motion of sun-sweetened airs,  
The invariable beauty, like the clear  
Transfiguration of a dream, appeared  
To the dazed vision of the inward eye, —  
While in the spirit and the sense we took  
Our lover's will of the consenting bride! . . .  
Thus to our eager and initiate sense —  
In love and the sole spirit's truth conjoined, —  
Yielding her violated privacies,  
Nature revealed her nuptial nakedness;  
And we, against our human breast of love,  
Held the one heart of life, and felt our hearts,  
Filled with its mighty pulse, thunder to song! . . .  
So, in the mind's resolute unity,  
All powers and phases of the natural world  
Showed the one urge within, and we discerned  
In the rich tissue of apparent things  
The secret sense which is not theirs but ours; —  
So, of the sunlight and the mystic dust,

## UNISON

The flowering hills, the open face of heaven,  
We phrased the full heart's wordless harmonies; —  
And so, to us, in liberty and light,  
Seemed the scarped summits of abiding stone  
Like the pure pinnacles of thought that rise  
In the clear aether of the mind's starred heaven! . . .

### 2

O life's exceeding hour of strength and grace,  
Of gentleness and passion, when, like gods,  
We walked in native virtue, and, at ease,  
Fashioned in beauty our apparent lives! —  
When, interfused, the heart's persuasive trust,  
In spirit and the enraptured sense contrived  
Of our two beings one communion,  
And life's ephemeral metamorphoses  
Yielded their secret and were one and ours! . . .  
Then was it well with us! — and so, in truth,  
So is it always with us, if we knew! —  
So are we always kinsmen of the sod  
And leagued with skies and mountains! Truth is one  
In the wide purpose of the spirit's life;  
And love's fount flows forever! . . . And so it is  
That when at last the liberated heart,  
With love or the rapt spirit's strength fulfilled,  
Gives what so long its senseless thrift withheld,  
We feel the mind's immortal pregnancies  
Come perfectly to birth, and haply see,

## UNISON

Clear in the freshening light, the pure gold's gleam  
Shine in the spirit's inmost treasures! . . .  
And so are we delivered! . . . So it is,  
As by the wind of loosed, uplifted wings  
Or the strong, tender touch of a loved hand,  
On secret chambers of the heart and mind.  
Some unsuspected door is set ajar,  
And all at once we feel the thrill and tone  
Of a great music, and the lyric cry  
Of phrased, puissant voices, sweet with song,  
Where, in life's holiest sanctuary, unknown,  
Unsought, inviolable, Olympian,  
The grave Gods feast together, and take no wrong  
Of the frail, feeble things we are and do!  
And thus — Yea, thus indeed — thus perfectly —  
We are advised how dull we are and blind;  
How with contracted powers our lives are waste;  
How we are bound like slaves, like victims scourged;  
And how in shame, damnation and defeat  
The brief times of our being are passed away,  
Which well might be, in each momentous hour,  
Valid with victory and phrased in song,  
Fragrant with love, and with the natural truth  
Of the pure spirit freed and sanctified —  
As one exceeding hour was once to us: —  
To us who were, from love-surrendered hearts,  
Thronged with the unpetitionable truth! . . .

## II

BREATHLESS and unforeseen, it comes! — the hour  
When, on the breast of the Beloved, we feel  
Almost the secret sense of life reveal  
Its meaning, and the source of life its power; —  
When, as in some vast sunrise, like a flower,  
Our soul stands open and our eyes unseal,  
While all that fear and ignorance conceal  
Seems in perfection life's predestined dower.  
Then, as it were against the inward ear,  
We hold in silence, like a chambered shell,  
The dazed one human heart . . . and seem to hear  
Forever and forever rise and swell  
And fail and fall on Death's eventual shore,  
Tragic and vast, life's inarticulate roar! . . .

### III

Love gave us sanctuary! — and sense and speech  
Of what we were at last, at most, at best;  
Love gave us strength and faith to manifest  
The soul's majestic virtues each to each.  
We learned from love, what love alone can teach,  
How love is dying in hearts that long for rest;  
Love showed us how man's life is lordliest;  
Love put the stars of thought within our reach . . .  
Love gave us guidance, and our right of way  
Into his Paradise: and there, alone,  
We were with love together day by day;  
Till we, in silence, breathless at the goal,  
Free of each other, burned and blent to one,  
Shared the last loneliest secret of the soul. . . .

#### IV

EARTH, sea and sky are not as once they were

To us: there is no aspect of all things,

No pulse of heart or brain, no whisperings

Of truth's grave music to the inward ear,

Unaltered or unglorified: the mere

Being of life, intense as song-swept strings,

Is like a breathless sense of soaring wings

Loosed in the spirit's boundless atmosphere! . . .

We are not as we were! Our feet have ranged

The summits of imperishable hours;

Life is a lordlier hope; and we, estranged

In secret and at heart from all control,

Walk in the wide new futures of the soul,

Charged as with incommensurable powers! . . .





## **STRENGTH AND SOLITUDE**



## STRENGTH AND SOLITUDE

### I

#### 1

SUN, moon and stars — inviolate firmament —  
Phases of earth's inveterate alchemy  
Of life and death — profound tranquillities,  
Thunders and trepidations of the sea —  
How often have you been to man in spirit  
A liberation and an ecstasy!  
How often has the soul gone forth with you,  
As, with the tide, a stranded caravel  
Issues by noble estuaries, impelled  
By streaming winds and led by the low sun,  
Into the light, into the infinite spaces! . . .  
How often has the majesty and silence  
Of starlight, or the clear crying of birds  
At dawn, or the vast violet skies of evening,  
Befriended us with spacious influences,  
Composed the mind in quiet exaltation,  
And, thro' the shining fabric of the soul's  
Inconstant vision of eternal things,  
Strained and refined the clouded wine of life!  
How often has the sound and spectacle  
And splendour of the universal being

## STRENGTH AND SOLITUDE

Affected and admonished us to know  
In all the common ways and days of life  
The immanence of spiritual rapture;  
And given us liberty at last to learn  
What correspondence and complicities  
Involve the soul with sun and moon and stars,  
With sky and earth and sea and countless forms,  
Passions and appetites and dissolutions,  
Powers and faiths and pregnancies of life!

### 2

We have laid down our ear to the dumb sod —  
We who are man and mortal as all things,  
And more and yet not otherwise than they —  
We have laid down our ear and heard the earth  
Of graves and the innumerable grass  
Whisper to us . . . and we have heard the sea,  
Delicate and enormous, shout aloud  
And murmur in the midnight and the moonrise  
Vastly and with a tired and tragic voice. . . .  
And we have heard the sunrise singing like  
A lyre of gold, and clear and faint and far,  
Star-choirs in the cosmic atmospheres! . . .  
And, hearing, we have caught out of the one  
Immeasurable voice from every hand  
Our own soul's secret, — we have felt, when all  
Our whole life's strength seemed one, and all our heart  
Was of one ecstasy, within ourselves

## STRENGTH AND SOLITUDE

These diverse voices blent into one tone  
Of the one Truth, one phrase of the one Song  
Everywhere singing for our audience! . . .  
Yea, and of all this music of all things,  
Surely we too, hearing, and very fain  
Of the full import, which is ours, may yet  
At last, at least — if nothing more — discern  
How much and ever and all in all the soul  
Is everywhere for everyone of us  
Immediate and importunate! — how much,  
In the pure purpose of the heart, the proud  
Desire of the indomitable mind, —  
Tho' the shrill chatter of our wasting lives  
Leaves us at last weak love and spent resolve —  
The truth is arduous and discoverable! —  
And O how much on every hand, how much,  
When the rare hour of sight and insight comes, —  
Tho' it reveal to us how we are not  
At best empowered and daring for great deeds, —  
The broadcast very light of liberation  
Flares in the narrow vistas of our vision,  
Shines in the windows of our prison-house,  
Flushed and persuasive and unquenchable! . . .  
O let us hear and see and feel and know  
That nature, which is ours, that even we,  
We too, whose lives have left their utmost strength  
Unused, — we too, who have not truly known  
Nor arduously doubted, but instead

## STRENGTH AND SOLITUDE

Basely believed what seemed and was not true,  
May yet, at last, for the soul's sake, discern  
How all the meaning and the mystery  
Go hand in hand and commonly along  
The thronged and trampled avenues of life  
And death, — how always and how much,  
Whether in nature's elemental being,  
Whether in labours of the lonely mind,  
Whether in love fulfilled, or life's gross toil  
And long-deferred perfection, by the soul  
We are invaded and possessed and graced!  
O let us, to the body and blood of life,  
And to the heart and soul of what we are,  
So animate and kindle that at last,  
Welcomed, restored, reminded to ourselves,  
We too may seem to pass beyond the veil,  
Threadbare with light, — beyond the place of pas-  
sions,  
And, on the threshold of the Sanctuary,  
Hear the last questions answered in the silence! . . .

### 3

Yet, in that very moment when we dream  
Of the soul's inmost self as one fulfilled,  
Full well we know the end is not, — nor is there  
Ever an end more absolute than now!  
There is a strength and solitude within us  
That will not let us rest! . . . and well we know

## STRENGTH AND SOLITUDE

That freshly and forever they shall return,  
The unanswered question and the pregnant doubt;  
And we, have we the passion and the power,  
We shall emerge from where we entered in,  
Deeming the goal was near, and pass beyond —  
There to discern perfections unachieved,  
There to reanimate to truths unknown  
And liberties we dare not specify! . . .  
Had we the strength! — Have we perhaps the strength,  
Who have all else beside? Are we not men?  
Is not the Universe our dwelling-place?  
And therefore perfectly in truth for us  
Is not the utmost wholly possible? . . .  
O, with the baffled and the resolute  
Vanguard of liberal humanity, —  
O to so purge our lives of the mild hours,  
Our hearts of humble longings and meek hopes,  
Our minds of customs and credulities,  
That we may find the days wholly fulfilled  
And lightened of the Spirit — all the days  
And all things and ourselves, rich and revealed  
In the majestic meanings and the might  
And passion and pure purpose of the soul! . . .  
O to be with Them — with their lives who lived  
In truth, and with their hearts which knew no ease,  
And with their souls which could not be denied! . . .  
O to be with Them! — Let us be with Them!  
Yea, we are more sufficient than we seem,

## STRENGTH AND SOLITUDE

We who stand out in the forefront of time,  
Last of the living generations, set  
With sleepless eyes on the last verge of thought. . . .  
For we alone, bravely and all in all,  
We have usurped God's ancient heritage:  
And where He died we hear a single voice  
Of one who wakes into the world's dominion —  
Our own voice singing where His choirs are mute:  
A voice of challenge and of celebration;  
A voice of love, puissant and serene;  
A voice that rings up the long road, and breaks,  
Where the Night closes like a dead man's lips,  
The inert, dark, dreadful taciturnities. . . .  
A voice which the sad silence of spent things  
Out of the Past, — which all the harsh and high  
Clamour of life's huge process in the world,  
Threatens, it may be, but shall not subdue  
In anyone of all the least of us,  
If we but rouse in our whole living strength,  
As Jesus, once, and Socrates, to dare  
And live and doubt and die for the sole Truth! . . .



## II

THOUGHT's holy place is like a sepulchre;  
The wine of love's communion cup is spilled;  
The House of Life is like a tavern filled  
With harlots, slaves and strangers, and the stir  
Of dancing feet before the flute-player,  
Of shallow voices shrill and counterfeit:  
And there the smoky lamps of lust are lit,  
And faith is frail, and truth is sinister . . .  
Yet, in the sacred chambers of the mind,  
He lies as in his grave who is the Lord . . .  
No rumours vex him, and his eyes are blind  
As death, and he is dead — like Lazarus!  
What Christ shall resurrect him with a word? . . .  
What Saviour bring him back to being thus? . . .

### III

WE, who are spent with weakness, wrath and lust;  
We, who endure such vile captivities;  
We, who descend by desolate degrees  
The steep dark way, till dust returns to dust; —  
We, who are pure, exalted and august;  
We, who are Jesus, who are Socrates,  
Who are compact of sacred mysteries,  
Who are the very soul, loving and just: —  
Sheltered in life's deserted House, we seem  
Abject and senseless, like poor beasts who lair  
In some vast palace where death's darkness creeps  
Silently down to where we crouch, from where,  
Perfect and solitary and supreme,  
Heedless and motionless, the Master sleeps. . . .

#### IV

TRULY there is no law but truth; there is  
No judge but justice. They who use the sword  
Shall perish by the sword, for no reward  
Is there but virtue, nor shall evil miss  
The strict revenge of its calamities,  
Since in and of ourselves, perforce, are scored  
Exact effects for every deed and word, —  
Nor life, nor death forego the least of this!  
Nothing effects our destinies save we:  
Ours is the seed we sow, the fruit we reap —  
Yea, and the heart's one flame of ecstasy,  
And the soul's vigil we are sworn to keep,  
And life's low average of strife and sleep,  
And, O, the best we are and dare not be! . . .



# THE NOCTAMBULIST



## THE NOCTAMBULIST

### I

THAT night of tempest and tremendous gloom,  
Across the table, for (it seemed to us)  
An age of silence, in the dim-lit room,  
Tenantless of all humans save ourselves,  
Yet seeming haunted, as old taverns are,  
With the spent mirth of unremembered men, —  
He mused at us. . . . And then, "I know! . . ." he  
said,

"I know! . . . O Youth! . . . I too have seen the  
world

"At sunrise, candid as the candid dew;

"And felt, responsive to the cosmic life,

"My senses kindle and my veins abound, —

"My life leap forward like an eager flame!

"I know! . . . It all returns to thrill me thro'

"To-night: — how much upon the virgin mind

"Often the truth lies lettered plain and large,

"When, on the face of things, the flushed new sense

"Finds revelations which our faith receives,

"Till the whole meaning, from the spectacle

"Of earth and sea and sky, — our hearts attuned, —

"Smiles out under the sun! I know to-night —

"Catching your eyes beyond the candle-flame —

## THE NOCTAMBULIST

“With joy, and not without a kind of sad  
“Compassion, and the weariness of one  
“Who has been all the rounds of repetition,  
“How much you take it all for granted! Yes! . . .  
“And that’s perhaps prosperity, as you  
“Esteem it — chiming in your singing tones  
“With the world’s coarse appraisal. Now, at least,  
“You feel man’s life sufficient, and your strength  
“Surpassing the whole task! You look abroad,  
“And see the new adventure wait for you,  
“Splendid with wars and victories; — for you  
“Trust the masqued face of Destiny. But I —  
“I’ve turned the Cosmos inside out!” he said;  
And on his lips the shadow of a smile  
Looked hardly human: “ . . . Inside out!” he said.  
And we said nothing; we discerned a vague,  
Certain and incommunicable sense  
That we, in his inscrutable regard,  
Were but as phases of some general dark,  
In which his life was spent, staring for stars. . . .  
Then we remembered how it sometimes chanced  
That he would sit and talk, over his wine,  
Of his adventures; so we held our peace,  
And saw the candle-flame burn up before  
His solitary eyes, and could not smile  
At recollection of his trivial phrase,  
As still he smiled, — till, “I have been,” he said,  
“Since I was young like you — as once I was! —



## THE NOCTAMBULIST

“Round and about this little, day-lit world,  
“And drained its springs of wisdom! — And to you,  
“Who’ll not believe me, — since no man is spared  
“His journey round the world, and from the Springs  
“No drop can pass to quench another’s thirst, —  
“I’ll tell the ancient, ill-considered truth:  
“Wisdom’s a shallow source, and all the world  
“Is near and small! Yes! the one soul within  
“Contains them all and yearns unsatisfied! . . .  
“Yet, I believe, you realize, at the least,  
“That ignorance can only be the bliss  
“Of fools, and fools — Well, you are not so tame!  
“You’ll make the journey, — for at last by these  
“Peripatetics one may chance to learn  
“What knowledge is, — and then — and then — at last,  
“Bounding the Lord’s domain on every hand, —  
“As here the unconquered darkness circumscribes  
“Our candle’s humble regency of light, —  
“There are the Frontiers!” In his eyes there shone  
Perilous ecstasies. . . . He paused; and we  
Saw the mild radiance slumber in his wine,  
Sweet as stored sun-light from the vine-clad hills,  
And felt our hearts beat high, as tho’ we shared  
His solitude, and in the ambient dark  
Stared with his star-lit vision. . . . “Yes,” he said,  
“There are the frontiers, — far for you, and near  
“About me hour by hour; and all between  
“Is the old, same adventure of the mind,

## THE NOCTAMBULIST

“Seeking, with no suspicion how the end  
“Will cheat its longing and deride its hope,  
“Ever its long-accumulating spoil,  
“Its hard-won, hazardous inheritance.  
“Yes! — I have stood in the beginning, where  
“You stand; and gone the journey you shall go;  
“Wrought the same tasks, and battled with the Gods —  
“As all we must! — and loved, as all we may,  
“With the old, pagan ecstasy! My sense  
“Was not less foolish nor less keen than yours  
“Of freedom measured as my will should choose:  
“So, in my scorn and strength and pride, I chose —  
“Heedless of all save just the mind’s conceived  
“Perfection, and the heart’s imagined best —  
“Life’s lordliest liberties: — chose Love — chose

Truth —

“Chose to respond in all my works and days  
“To powers transcendent, which I knew not of! . . .  
“So, witless, wilful, wonder-struck with life,  
“I captained all my voyage with ambition  
“Nothing could satiate — as the failure proves!  
“Yes, I was young, I grant you! — Ah, but what  
“If now, despite all wisdom and the years,  
“Youth’s first resolve, in life and spirit still  
“Held stedfast unto death? I ask you, then  
“Might not the heart within me, greatly glad, —  
“Almost with pride, as one who sees the gold  
“Of day-break glinting in his sunset skies, —

## THE NOCTAMBULIST

“Revive its by-gones? Yes! I feel anew —  
“The young heart’s blood afire in every vein —  
“What love was once (who know what love can be  
“To the whole man matured!), when I — I too,  
“Flame-fed with passion in the moonless night,  
“Watched to descry one casement thrust aside,  
“To hear one voice make music of my name;  
“Or felt the silken whisper of one robe,  
“The beating of one heart, one eager tread  
“Come to my assignation in the dusk! . . .  
“Yes! . . . and I feel anew the splendid zest  
“Of youth’s brave service in truth’s ancient cause, —  
“When, with the self-same thunders that you use,  
“Edged with a wit — at no time Greek! — I too  
“Most pleasurably assailed and tumbled down,  
“With a fine sense of conquest and release,  
“The poor, one, old, enfeebled, cheerless God  
“Left to us of our much be-Deitied  
“And more be-Devilled past! And much beside  
“I well recall; and if I smile, it is  
“The smile we give to children — not in scorn!  
“Rather be sure I know there are those things  
“We do in youth, and may not choose but do:  
“Old battles fought again, old voyages  
“Renewed, and old discoveries re-made,  
“And much brave marching in well-trodden ways, —  
“All with a freshness beautifully ours!  
“Youth has its spacious leisures, when the brave,

## THE NOCTAMBULIST

“Superfluous, necessary things are done;  
“When worlds are conquered; when the old vain Gods  
“Must fall again; when in the very face  
“Of multitudes we revolutionize!  
“And all’s well done, I doubt not; — tho’ the times  
“Of life may well seem all too brief to waste!  
“But this comes later, when — we learn! — as learn  
“We must, if we go forward still from strength  
“To strength incessantly, — to wage no more  
“With phantoms of the past fortunate wars;  
“To die no longer on the barricades  
“For the true faith; to spend no more the rich  
“And insufficient days and powers of life  
“Striving to shape the world and force the facts,  
“Tame the strong heart and stultify the soul,  
“To fit some creed, some purpose, some design  
“Ingeniously contrived to spare the weak,  
“Protect the timid and delude the fools, —  
“Who feel no deep, inspired response to life’s  
“Whole power and peril; — and to beautify  
“By nice discrimination, — to explain  
“By phrase and fraud and fancy, — to reform  
“By dint of gross damnations and a most  
“Robust stupidity! The time must come  
“When we can deal in partialities  
“No more, if truth shall prosper: for we stand  
“Awfully face to face with just the whole  
“Secret — our unrestricted Universe,

## THE NOCTAMBULIST

“Spirit and sense! . . . And then, abruptly then,  
“Swift as a passion, brutal as a blow,  
“The Dark shuts down! . . . and, desolate amid  
“Fair ruined dreams and strangled ecstasies  
“And lights we saw as stars, suddenly quenched,  
“We stand upon the Frontiers, and confront  
“The illimitable Night! . . . And, O, the truth  
“Is terrible within us! — for at last  
“We touch our bounds — we fill, in every gyre,  
“In all its pearly mansions, wondrously,  
“Up from what blind beginnings, long-evolved —  
“The unfinished shell of our humanity;  
“And feel the sunless, soulless, shoreless sea  
“Immeasurably about us . . . and we know —  
“Walled round and prisoned in the senseless dark —  
“How little we are free! . . .” He smiled no more.  
His lean hands closed together, and the light  
Waned in the silence like a dying song. . . .  
Our minds seemed sleepless as a star, our hearts  
Yearned to his meaning, and our eyes discerned  
The plain lights lessen and his face grow far. . . .  
Then, as it seemed out of the dark, he said —  
“The Night is best! — for only when we fill  
“The total measure of our human ken,  
“And feel in every exercise of being  
“The bondage of our fixed infirmities,  
“Are we assured that we, in every cell  
“And nerve, respond to all life’s whole appeal,

## THE NOCTAMBULIST

“Known and unknown, in sense and heart and brain;  
“And, utterly at last in unison, —  
“Beast, man and God, their several strengths as one, —  
“Meet the whole issue as a true whole man!  
“Only the Night is best — the Night wherein  
“Our eyes, long-used and wearied with the gross  
“World’s inconsiderable spectacle,  
“Grow spacious, and, no longer blind with sun,  
“See, in the incommensurable dark,  
“Sudden as song, above, beyond us — stars! . . .”  
He paused; and then, across the table’s space,  
Gazed, as it were to fix us, each in turn;  
And, with a smile that failed to cheer us, said —  
“I’m a Noctambulist! — for in the Dark  
“Journeys are endless; and the virtue is  
“Of life’s pure essence, which we term the soul,  
“To find small profit in appointed ends,  
“And weary of a measurable world.  
“My feet have tried all paths that man has trod,  
“And all lead out thro’ twilights, and beyond,  
“Where man has never trod — and where I go! . . .  
“And life and love and death and thought and truth  
“Seem strange and new to me, — who yet have been  
“Round and about this little, day-lit world,  
“And drained its springs of wisdom, — as to you  
“They do not seem, in youth’s fresh hour of faith!  
“For the reality is all my care!  
“Little I heed, in splendour or dismay,



## THE NOCTAMBULIST

“How men perambulate their common streets,  
“Drifted and driven, caused and causeless things;  
“Or drench the highways of their huddled march —  
“Forced by essential powers they only serve —  
“With sweat and blood and tears. They go their rounds,  
“Caged and constricted, forced and overborne,  
“And all unconscious of their servitude  
“And dark confinements, — helpless, pitiable  
“And insignificant; yet all their boast  
“Is freedom, and their faith is liberty.  
“But he alone is free — at least in some  
“Measure he may be free! — who takes the Dark’s  
“Uncharted venture with a homeless eye! . . .”

In the strict silence while he spoke no more  
We heard the tumult of our hearts, and feared  
Almost as men fear death, and knew not why  
We feared . . . until at last, while at the closed  
Windows the wind cried like a frenzied soul,  
He said, “I too have tried, of mortal life,  
“The daily brief excursions! Now I watch  
“You turn and turn in the same beaten track  
“Of brief desires and strict necessities,  
“While from the thronged vast circus round about  
“Stare down upon you all the eyes of the world  
“Which crowns the victor and the vanquished scorns!  
“And thus, or well or ill, you run your race,  
“Going no-whither tho’ the prize be won . . .  
“I know! — I ran once! — and at last o’er-ran

## THE NOCTAMBULIST

“My shadow! — Yes! — and so, abruptly paused,  
“Torn with tremendous laughter and wild tears,  
“Feeling truth’s silent and relentless scorn,  
“Flame-edged, of all I was and all my deeds;  
“And set upon by the derisive shout  
“And fear and anger of the world, I broke  
“The circus walls, and hastily passed on,  
“And found the Darkness everywhere, and saw,  
“Thereafter, certain stars! . . . And now, at least,  
“I go no more the dull, determined rounds,  
“Like a tame squirrel whirling in its cage!  
“I’m a Noctambulist: and in the Night  
“The star-traced, trackless ways return no more. . . .  
“Thus have I learned that only in the dark  
“The freedom and the kingdom of the spirit  
“Are ours to seek; and I have felt the one  
“Utterly loosed and loving woman’s heart,  
“There where the twilights failed and night came on,  
“Thrill to life’s inmost secret on my breast . . .  
“And I have known the whole of life and been  
“The whole of man! The Night is best! — for here,  
“Here where the world throngs and the day-light falls,  
“Here show the Marches and no Stars are seen! . . .”  
He rose, and we, who watched his face, discerned  
The passion! . . . Swiftly he resumed his cloak —  
And he was gone! . . . and thro’ the open door  
Bellowed the tempest, and the star-less dark  
Over our one, quenched candle reigned supreme! . . .



## II

WE heard his footfall on the vacant stair  
The whole night long. We lay awake in bed  
And heard him climb; — but those who slept instead  
Smiled and assured us that he was not there.

We had our own important things to care  
About — place, profit and the daily bread;  
And then the street so thundered in one's head . . .  
And often life 's a commonplace affair!

Yet then we heard him! — we not they were right:  
We heard him — Yes! tho' now we sleep by night  
Almost as soundly as we sleep by day,

We waked, we heard him, heard — and nothing  
more. . . .

For we, inert as they who heard not, lay  
Damned and dishonoured as he passed our door!

### III

RECREANTS un-armoured for a hopeless war,  
We made with life the needful compromise:  
Yet, tho' we were not great or good or wise,  
We knew that he was not as all men are! . . .  
The meaning of the things he said was far  
To us, and in the darkness of his skies,  
Save as the light was mirrored in his eyes,  
I think we never saw a single star . . .  
Yet, in the vexed and vital years of youth,  
At night, alone, with all our bargains made,  
We found his smile intolerable as truth;  
For we, sere'd soul-deep by that scorn of his,  
Felt in ourselves his ancient, undismayed,  
Inexorable incredulities! . . .

#### IV

“ONLY the Dark! . . . Only the Mystery! . . .”

He said. “Only beyond, above, before! . . .

“Only — O Captives of the wave-walled shore! —

“Only the incommensurable sea! . . .

“Only, for eyes that all too wisely see

“The sun at midday, and are blind therefore,

“Only the Dark — where, lambent to the core,

“Gyre the great stars’ deepening galaxy! . . .

“Only of ignorance the ancient wrong;

“Only of life the viewless counterpart;

“Only of truth the secret undivined;

“Only — new ranges for the feet of song,

“New loves of the inextinguishable heart,

“New powers of the imperishable mind! . . .”



# FAITH



## FAITH

### I

THERE'S a star overseas like a dew-drop new-hung on  
a bud that uncloses;

There's a fire in the turrets of heaven; there's a flush  
on the breast of the sea;

And the gates of the sun-rise are filled with a flame as of  
myriad roses,

That kindles ineffable vistas, a world re-created for  
me.

There's a hill in its vestment of dew-fall that kneels like  
a priest to the altar;

Low bird-cries resound in the silence, frail tendrils  
reach forth to the light;

The fields flower-breasted are fragrant, and fresh the  
faint breezes that falter: —

Life's faith in the future is perfect, life's dream of eter-  
nity bright! . . .

If ours were the faith of the petals unfolding, the nest  
and its treasure, —

The faith all revealed and illumined, the faith that  
alone makes us free, —

## FAITH

What divine understanding were ours of the sun-light  
that flows without measure,  
Of the silver of moon-light that rings down the resonant  
floor of the sea! . . .

What divine understanding for life; for the world how  
majestic a meaning;  
What truths by the way-side; in martyrdom, poverty,  
pain, what delight;  
What poems in the midnight; what visions revealed  
that the darkness was screening,  
As like fire-tinged incense the dawn-mists flush deep  
round the knees of the night! . . .

O, beware! for the safety we cherish is false: — we are  
blind! we are soothless! —  
Have we learned how the fields are made fruitful? Are  
we aimed to life's ultimate goal? —  
O for faith to accept for our lives not an ecstasy less, not  
a truth less,  
Than the world and the senses afford us, than are  
sphered in the scope of the soul! . . .



## II

TO-DAY the Lord sleeps in the House of Life . . .  
Round him the dark is dumb, deserted, deep;  
And all the haste we make, the feast we keep,  
The law we serve with cross and cord and knife,  
The Gods we supplicate, the tears we weep,  
The crowns we win as victors in the strife,  
The forms and fears with which our days are rife,  
Like vague, fantastic dreams perturb his sleep . . .  
He sleeps and dreams to-day and yesterday. —  
When shall he wake, and in his eyes the breath  
Of day-break burn with truth's eternal beams?  
When shall he wake? . . . We ask in wild dismay! —  
Haste! lest he sleep, as now he sleeps and dreams,  
Dreamless to-morrow in the House of Death! . . .

### III

YET, as the truth's new testament contrives,  
Daily within the meditative mind,  
Orbits of light where thought before was blind,  
And where was doubt supreme imperatives; —  
So, in the high adventure of our lives,  
As we are real, receptive, unresigned,  
Seeking the Lord, we shall not fail to find:  
Till strength by strength his regency revives . . .  
Then shall his will and work alone be done  
In all we do; his voice alone resound  
In all we say; and he alone confound —  
Imperishable when all else perisheth! —  
With eyes of daring and dominion,  
The void, vast vision of the Sphinx of Death! . . .

#### IV

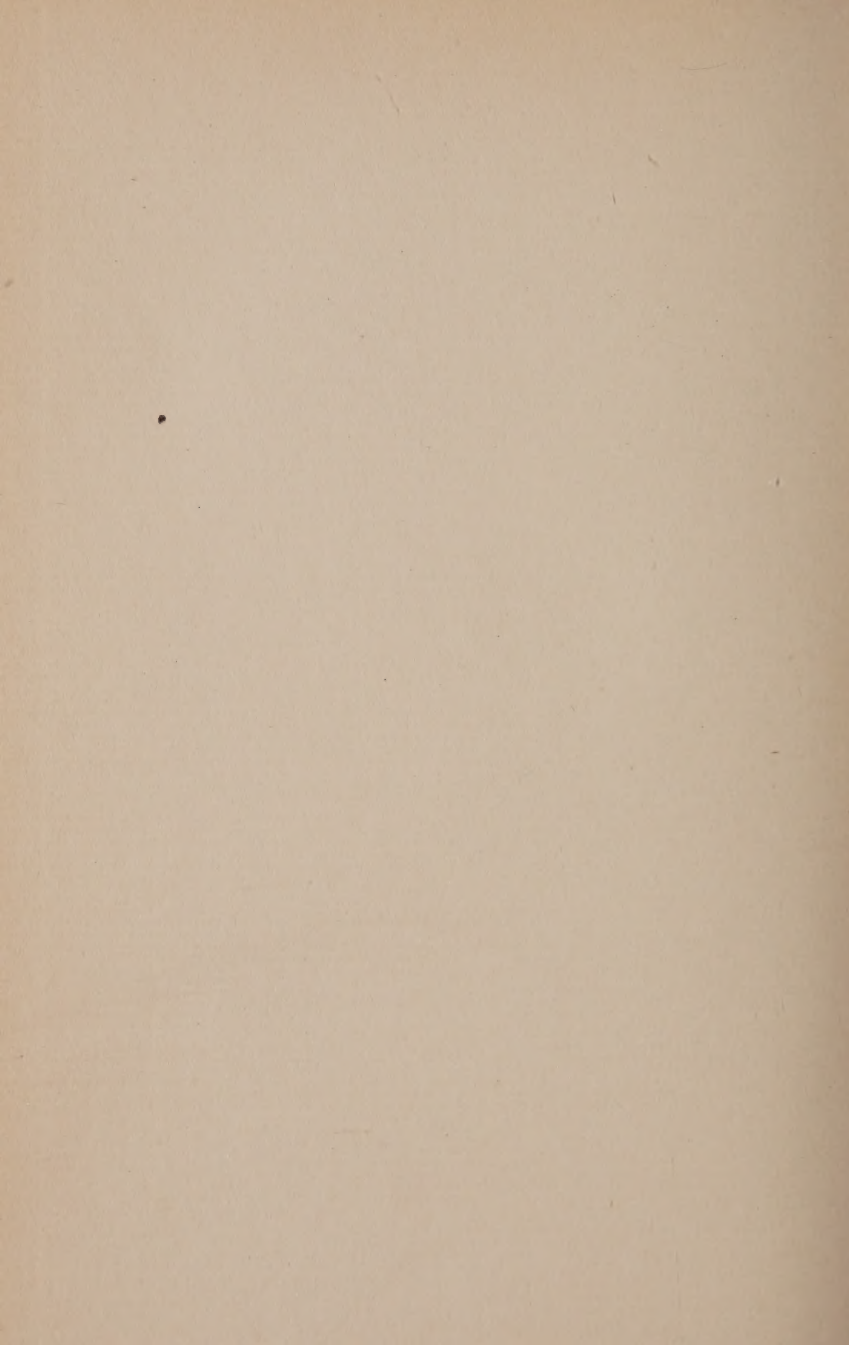
HOURLY to find perfection in all things,  
And in ourselves perfection; — day by day,  
Greatly adventured on the endless way,  
To realize truth's inspired imaginings; —  
To beat up the wide skies of thought on wings  
Radiant with sunrise; — to depart away  
Into the future with the great grave gay  
Passionate heart of life that loves and sings; —  
This is the soul's desire! — the secret aim  
Of life's dim aspiration, from the sod  
Thro' countless forms, thro' beast and man and  
God! —  
This is the mind's pure ecstasy; and this  
Is love, which kindles to a single flame  
Life's immemorial validities!

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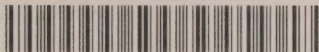








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